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Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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Senator MANSFIELD. Only if we return to the Geneva Accords which seem to be a thing of the past.

Mr. KOPPEL. Senator, one thing concerns me about this expanded notion and that is the peace talks in Paris have already been paralyzed into inactivity over the past couple of years. Don't you think that by bringing in four more—I mean it would amount to at least four delegations—you are just going to make it so cumbersome nothing could possibly come out of it?

Senator MANSFIELD. Not if you pick the right people and create the right format. All they are talking about now is Vietnam, but what about Cambodia, what about Laos where the war is being lost and lost badly. These are two countries, I think, which the North Vietnamese and the Cambodians in Cambodia and the Pathet Laos and North Vietnamese in Laos could take over almost for the taking.

Mr. KOPPEL. Do you think the United States has any moral responsibility toward these two countries, toward Laos and Cambodia?

Senator MANSFIELD. Only in the case of rehabilitation after the war is concluded because we have helped to despoil their culture, we have defoliated the countries concerned, we have created a refugee class. We have disrupted their society and I think we have a moral obligation after the war is over to bring about the rehabilitation of that entire area.

Mr. CLARK. Senator, the Congress this past year voted a ceiling on American aid to both Laos and Cambodia, about \$350 million in each case, with big loopholes that did not include the cost of American air support, or the troops of South Vietnam, and it has been rather ineffective for that reason.

Do you think this new session of Congress should reimpose a lower ceiling or take some other affirmative action to keep the war from spreading more widely in Laos and Cambodia?

Senator MANSFIELD. Yes, I do. I wish the Congress would reimpose a lower ceiling. As far as I am concerned, I don't intend to vote for funds for Laos or Cambodia.

Mr. CLARK. Would you personally get involved in proposing and supporting a lower ceiling of aid to Laos and Cambodia?

Senator MANSFIELD. I do not anticipate doing so at the moment because, as I said, I intend to vote against funds for both.

Mr. KOPPEL. Now, Senator, you have proposed several times over the past several years a six months U.S. troop withdrawal from Vietnam in return for the return of American prisoners of war. Is that kind of resolution still necessary now when the President is obviously phasing out American troops?

Senator MANSFIELD. Yes, I think it is because the President, while he is obviously phasing out the American troop strength in Vietnam, has indicated, if I have interpreted his remarks correctly when he announced the last draw-down, that it was his intention to keep a residual force there. But what is happening is as we are withdrawing, we are getting no quid pro quo. What I want to see is the prisoners of war and the recoverable missing in action taken into consideration and released at the same time, if such a proposal is possible and such a proposal has not yet been made in Paris.

Mr. KOPPEL. Why do you think it would be easier now to get your kind of resolution passed in Congress? It would seem to me that it would become harder as more and more troops come back.

Senator MANSFIELD. Oh, no. The Senate has expressed itself, I believe, on three occasions, and it appears to me that the feeling in this respect is increasing in both houses of the Congress. Furthermore, it would be in accord with what the President himself has stated, that he wanted the POWs released before the final withdrawals were made. We had better continue to make attempts in that direction. We aren't doing so at the moment.

Mr. CLARK. The President, in his State of the Union Address this past week said he will ask for an increase in the defense budget. The word from the Pentagon is that that requested increase will be between \$4 and \$5 billion. Will this Congress vote that much more money for defense?

Senator MANSFIELD. I hope not. I think it is entirely too much. I think we spend too much on defense because we waste too much on defense. We are involved in the creation of exotic weapons and I think we can simplify our defense systems to a considerable extent and save a great deal of money. Money alone isn't the answer. \$82 billion for defense, with the problems we have at home, is entirely too much. We are spread too far, too wide, too thin throughout the world anyway.

Mr. CLARK. Specifically, Senator, the President said he will ask for \$900 Billion more to expand and improve our missile-carrying submarine fleet. Will you support that request?

Senator MANSFIELD. I think that has some merit because I think the punch in our defense system lies in the missile-carrying submarines, but I would like to see deductions and eradications in other areas.

Mr. CLARK. Well, despite, Senator, your strong views against an escalating defense budget, would you agree that there is cause for concern about the rapid advances made by the Soviet Union in some areas, including their expanding fleet of nuclear and missile-carrying subs?

Senator MANSFIELD. Not as much as the Pentagon would like to have us believe because I think at the present time we still have superiority. At the least, we have a stand-off and it is my belief we have superiority. We ought to get away from spending money for F-111s, C-5As and other planes of those types which have cost so much and gone way beyond cost estimates and get back to simplicity in building and in reducing the application of funds.

Mr. CLARK. Well, Senator, to convert all this into a practical prediction, would you say it is likely that Congress will approve a small increase in defense spending, will vote this money for an expanded submarine fleet, an increase of perhaps a billion or two dollars but will not give the President all he has asked?

Senator MANSFIELD. No, he will not get all that he has asked. One thing the public hasn't been aware of is that John Stennis and his Armed Services Committee have been doing a tremendously effective job over the past two or three years in reducing the budget requests. I think somewhere between one and two billion dollars over the past two years and about two billion dollars three years ago.

Mr. CLARK. Would you think it is likely that Congress will vote some increase in the defense budget?

Senator MANSFIELD. I wouldn't be surprised, but my vote will not go in that direction.

Mr. KOPPEL. Well, Senator, one thing concerns me about that. For all these years we have been in Vietnam, we have been hearing talks about the peace dividends that will accrue once the war is over. All this money that was to be made available for domestic programs. What has happened to that?

Senator MANSFIELD. Well, the Administration tells us that it goes for additional weapons—exotic weapons, I would assume—that it goes to pay the pay raises which the Congress has voted three times in the last year, or year and a half. That eats up the difference plus, of course, the inflation, which has been plaguing us over the past several years, going back into the previous Democratic administration. All those are factors to be considered.

But you know I think we ought to really look at the facts about the war in Vietnam and Southeast Asia. This is the longest war

SENATOR MANSFIELD APPEARS ON "ISSUES AND ANSWERS"

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the "Issues and Answers" program of January 23, 1972, be incorporated at this point in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the program was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

ISSUES AND ANSWERS

Guest: Senator Mike Mansfield, Senate Majority Leader.

Interviewed by: Bob Clark, ABC News Capitol Hill Correspondent, and Ted Koppel, ABC News State Department Correspondent.

Mr. KOPPEL. Senator, even as the United States is pulling out of Vietnam, things are going badly in Laos and Cambodia. Is there anything that could or should be done by the United States at this point?

Senator MANSFIELD. No, I think they were both mistakes. I think what we ought to do is have a peace conference which would include the appropriate representatives from Cambodia and Laos, and sort of lengthen the table or extend it so we can bring about a decision if possible on the entire Indochina question.

Mr. KOPPEL. Where would that take place, you just invite delegates from Laos and Cambodia to go to Paris?

Senator MANSFIELD. Delegates should be selected, the meeting I think has probably outlived its usefulness in Paris and very likely should be removed someplace closer to the scene of activity, perhaps at Rangoon, in Burma.

Mr. CLARK. Senator, for the next month the spotlight is going to be on Peking and the President's visit to Peking. Do you think the proposal you have just made should be formally taken to Peking by the President?

Senator MANSFIELD. No, the President has his responsibilities. These are just suggestions on my part. If they have any merit, I would hope the President would give them consideration and act accordingly.

Mr. CLARK. Do you think the People's Republic of China should be involved in an expanded peace conference that would include Laos and Cambodia?

in the history of this Republic. In casualties it is second to the Second World War and in cost it is second to the Second World War.

Mr. CLARK. Senator, there is considerable evidence that the Soviet Union wants to establish a strong Naval presence in the Indian Ocean. There is also some evidence that the United States is responding.

Are we in danger, do you think, of building up a new area of confrontation between the United States and the Soviets in that part of the world?

Senator MANSFIELD. Oh, yes. We are building a communications station at Diego Garcia in the middle of the ocean and I noted with surprise that we have taken over the lease which the British had on Bahrain in the Persian Gulf. It appears to me we are following the same old policy.

As the British vacate, we step in. We haven't got the resources and we shouldn't have that responsibility.

Mr. KOPPEL. Senator Mansfield, I'd like to get back to your proposal for expanded peace talks. Realistically, how would this begin? How would you go about expanding the peace talks in Southeast Asia?

Senator MANSFIELD. Well, I think we ought to bring in Laos and Cambodia and we ought to have the appropriate representative from those states. After all, you can't settle the Vietnamese War on its own without taking into consideration Cambodia and Laos.

Mr. KOPPEL. What I am wondering is, whom do you consider to be the representative of, let's say, Cambodia?

Senator MANSFIELD. I would say that Sihanouk ought to be given consideration as far as Laos is concerned that it would be that king, Savang Vathana.

Mr. KOPPEL. He is sitting up in Luang Prabang and has taken no active role thus far in any of this?

Senator MANSFIELD. That is right. He has the religious and patriotic loyalty of all factions. I think he is the only man who can step in and do something in that pitiful war-ridden country. It is about time for somebody to step forth and take the responsibility which Souvanna Phouma and the others cannot seem to effectuate at the present time.

Mr. KOPPEL. Wouldn't you, for example, from Cambodia have anyone who could represent what could be called in quotes, "The allied cause?"

Senator MANSFIELD. No, I think Sihanouk represents the people of Cambodia, always has and still does.

Mr. CLARK. Senator, the President noted in his State of the Union Message this week there are some ninety of his legislative recommendations, including some major programs, still awaiting action in Congress. What do you see as the "must" items in this new session of Congress; the areas where you can assure the President that there will be action on his programs?

Senator MANSFIELD. The Welfare bill, Revenue Reform, Higher Education, all the appropriation bills. There are some others which he hasn't recommended such as the voter registration. That is about all I can think of at the moment, but there are others as well.

Mr. CLARK. But you are saying there will be action on welfare reform; there will be a revenue-sharing bill produced by this Congress?

Senator MANSFIELD. Oh, yes. Another one is government reorganization, which I am for, but I think the President has bit off too large a chunk to expect us to do anything in that area this year. He ought to cut that down to make a start in one area so we can go ahead and handle it as we go along. All these bureaus and departments which he wants to either eradicate or consolidate with others have their vested interests, people who are interested in them, in commerce and agriculture and what-not. They will make

it difficult—they will make it impossible to achieve the overall types of reorganization which the President wants, which I advocate, during a session of the Congress, or during a Congress.

Mr. CLARK. The President, in his State of the Union address this year sounded a new theme on revenue-sharing, where he talked about urgent action necessary to ease the burden of the property tax, that the taxpayers were in near revolt in some areas of the country, and to help channel more money into schools.

His expected solution to this, White House sources said that the President will probably propose a so-called value-added tax and you and other Democrats and almost all the presidential contenders promptly opposed the value-added tax.

Senator MANSFIELD. It is a sales tax and with all sales taxes it is the poor people who pay the most and who keep the kitty full.

Mr. CLARK. With this strong Democratic opposition, would you say that a value-added tax is dead before it is even proposed by the President?

Senator MANSFIELD. I don't think it is going to get very far, no.

Mr. CLARK. Will there be a Democratic alternative to value-added tax?

Senator MANSFIELD. Well, I don't know, but I, for example, would have no objection to increasing gasoline, liquor and tobacco taxes.

Mr. KOPPEL. Well, Senator, this seems to be one of the problems. You have a gaggle of Democratic candidates for President, each of them with his own pet plans. Is there anything that could be construed as a Democratic counter-proposal to everything that the President is talking about?

Senator MANSFIELD. Not now. Maybe later in the year.

Mr. KOPPEL. How is that ever going to come about? Do you mean after people have—

Senator MANSFIELD. In the Policy Committee and an appropriate Democratic caucus—not the next one—we will see what we can come up with.

Mr. CLARK. Well, Senator, if you don't come up with constructive alternatives—and I think most impartial observers of Congress would say that the Democrats did not do a very good job in this area this past year—Senator MANSFIELD. Oh, we didn't do too bad a job.

Mr. CLARK. I am talking about coming up with constructive Democratic alternatives and financial proposals.

Senator MANSFIELD. We did, we came up with some constructive proposals. I think by and large we did a respectable job in the first session and we will do as well in the second, if not better.

Mr. CLARK. If you don't do more this year aren't you going to invite the President to run against a do-nothing 92nd Congress just as Harry Truman ran against a do-nothing Republican Congress—

Senator MANSFIELD. Well, he had better study that picture very carefully because his people on the Finance Committee are the ones who are the main roadblocks to bringing out a welfare program which he advocated and about which, incidentally, I have some questions too.

Mr. KOPPEL. A number of leading Democrats have already criticized the President's State of the Union Address in rather partisan terms. Do you think that already lays to rest the rhetorical question that President Nixon raised about whether or not it is possible in a political year like this, to handle things in nonpartisan terms—

Senator MANSFIELD. It isn't possible, but I hope that we can reduce it to a minimum. The address was temperate—it didn't say much, it made practically nothing in the way of recommendations but held out promises which might be said to include the value

added tax and a few other matters. Unfortunately, we have so many candidates running from the Senate that politics is bound to become involved. I would hope that as far as the Senate is concerned, that there would be no politicking, or at least a minimum of politics—this applies to Republicans as well as the Democrats—and that the politicking would be done outside the Senate chamber, not in it.

Mr. KOPPEL. Is it going to make your job much more difficult during this coming year?

Senator MANSFIELD. It is tough anyway.

Mr. CLARK. Senator, isn't one of your problems going to be, with all of the Democrats running for President, they each have their own platforms that are evolving in the campaign and we have a Muskie anti-pollution plan and a Kennedy health plan and a McGovern plan to cut the defense budget and a Wilbur Mills revenue sharing plan. Now how are you going to blend all of these together into something voters can recognize as a Democratic plan?

Senator MANSFIELD. Oh, I am not looking that far ahead because all these proposals have to get out of committees and once they get out of committees then we will get down to the nub of your question.

Mr. CLARK. Is it really a matter of looking that far ahead? We are right on the verge of these Democratic primaries now. The political season is already under way. Where does this Democratic platform of constructive alternatives come from?

Senator MANSFIELD. That has been happening all along since this Administration has been in power and we have offered proposals which we thought would be helpful to the Administration. Unfortunately, it seems that down there they go into adversary proceedings and think what we are trying to do is undermine them when in fact we are trying to help them.

But I wouldn't worry too much about that platform yet. We will work out that particular procedure in time. Just as the Republicans will, because their platform isn't steady by any means at this moment.

Mr. KOPPEL. Senator Mansfield, approximately a year ago on this program you said that Senator Muskie was by far the strongest Presidential contender in the Democratic Party. Has anything happened during the past year to make you change your mind?

Senator MANSFIELD. No, except that more candidates have come in. I think the field is filled by now. Some of those candidates will drop out. The others will bunch together and I think that it will develop into a horse race and that the lead which Senator Muskie has, while it might be maintained—and it is considerable at the moment—might be bitten into depending on events as they develop.

Mr. KOPPEL. There is a new Gallop Poll, as you may know, that just came out taken among Democratic voters, showing for the first time Senator Muskie leading the field. He is now ahead of Senator Kennedy.

Senator MANSFIELD. That is right.

Mr. KOPPEL. You don't think he has got it wrapped up yet, though?

Senator MANSFIELD. No, I don't think so because there will be lots of questions asked in the meantime, some of them will be tough and it will be up to the delegates, the people in the states concerned, to make up their minds. But at the moment, Senator Muskie is considerably ahead.

Mr. CLARK. Senator, are there any of the Democratic contenders for President which you could not support?

Senator MANSFIELD. Well, wait until the Convention decides.

Mr. KOPPEL. We will ask you about one of them, now. Would you support George Wallace if by some chance he was the nominee?

Senator MANSFIELD. No, I wouldn't support Governor Wallace. I think Wallace is, in effect, running under the Democrat banner for purposes of his own but if he doesn't get it

then I imagine he will go back to his American Party or the other parties which got together last time to nominate him. He is a man you can't ignore because he pulled about 13 million votes three years ago.

Mr. KOPPEL. Senator Mansfield, the most emotional issue the Democrats are facing as they campaign around the country now is school busing. Do you think that the Congress will take any action to block or delay court-ordered school busing?

Senator MANSFIELD. That I can't say. Efforts will be made, amendments offered to either the pending legislation, the Equal Opportunities Act, or the Higher Education Bill, which will come before us when the EEOC is disposed of. What will happen at that time remains to be seen.

Mr. KOPPEL. As it stands right now, which party do you see benefitting the most or is it such an explosive issue that neither party is likely—

Senator MANSFIELD. I don't think it will benefit either party because it isn't just a Southern issue, it is a national issue and I think that what Senator Ribicoff, along with Senator Stennis tried to do last year, recognized that fact on a de jure and de facto basis.

Mr. CLARK. Well Senator, how do you as Majority Leader of the Senate, feel personally about the antibusing amendment that the House tacked last year onto the Higher Education Bill—and these would include amendments forbidding the use of federal funds for busing to achieve racial balance and an amendment postponing Federal Court orders for busing until all appeals have been exhausted?

Senator MANSFIELD. Well, I don't know what the Senate will do in that respect. I didn't get the first part of your question.

Mr. CLARK. How do you as Majority Leader of the Senate personally feel about these amendments?

Senator MANSFIELD. I don't think they should be on there because I think they are part of the law of the land. They are based on the '54 Brown vs. Board of Education decision and it isn't a matter of whether you like it or not, it isn't a matter as much of racial balance as it is a matter of quality education.

Mr. CLARK. Well, Senator, do you agree or disagree with President Nixon in his opposition to busing solely to achieve racial balance in schools? And there is the crux of the problem.

Senator MANSFIELD. I don't think anybody believes that the purpose is just to achieve racial balance but it is to achieve equality in education, quality education. As far as our citizens are concerned, may I say that busing is not a new factor. It has been in effect in this country since the turn—well, since the beginning of the automobile, really, and this is a step on the way to quality education, equally applicable to all races.

Mr. CLARK. Well, Senator, it has been eighteen years now since that 1954 Supreme Court school desegregation decision that you mentioned, and still in the great ghettos of the north there are hundreds and hundreds of schools that are all black. Would you go into a massive busing—and I know some people regard that as a trigger word, but would you go into a massive busing program to achieve school integration in the north?

Senator MANSFIELD. I don't think massive busing is necessary. Equality of education; quality education, is why I voted for the Ribicoff-Stennis Amendment, which would apply the same standards to all the states, the north and the south east and west—and, after all, education is a state responsibility and a state function.

Mr. KOPPEL. Well, how do you get quality education, Senator?

Senator MANSFIELD. By busing if need be, or by the local school boards themselves raising up the standards and the school

boards themselves can bring about busing if they desire to do so. That was allowed under the '54 decision.

Mr. CLARK. Well, Senator, one of the Democratic presidential candidates, Senator Jackson, interprets this move to quality education as meaning that he would—in essence, you would bus black children into white schools but not white children into black schools if they were inferior. Is that what you are talking about, one-way busing?

Senator MANSFIELD. No, not one-way busing, because I think busing, if it is going to be applicable, has to work both ways, but then you get back to the nub of the question and that is quality education. That is the thing which should be done. If you do that you won't have any busing. Busing is a passing phase.

Mr. KOPPEL. Realistically, Senator, can you think of any circumstances under which the black school would be better than the local white school a few miles away?

Senator MANSFIELD. No, except through an intermingling of the pupils of all races. Don't talk of black schools only because remember the Chinese situation in San Francisco, think of the chicanos, the Puerto Ricans and the others as well.

Mr. KOPPEL. While you are on the west coast, the President has asked Congress for immediate legislation to end the west coast dock strike, legislation that would provide for compulsory arbitration. You have always been considered a friend of labor. Could you support such a move?

Senator MANSFIELD. I don't know. The President sent his proposal up. We will see what comes out of the Committee on Labor. I am ordinarily opposed to enforced arbitration. Something has to be done, so I will endeavor to keep an open mind and if the committee reports out a bill it will be given expeditious consideration.

Mr. CLARK. The President says he wants action this week because of what he regards—

Senator MANSFIELD. But the committee says they won't start holding hearings until the middle of next week and we can't act until they report out something.

Mr. CLARK. Senator, we wanted to ask you one quick final question. The Congressional Quarterly recently ran its tabulation of the support given the President in 1971. On 82 votes last year you supported him only 28 per cent of the time and opposed him on 55 per cent of the votes. Do you think you can better that record in 1972?

Senator MANSFIELD. I never heard those figures. I am delighted to have them but, as always, I will exercise my own independent judgment and do the best I can as a Senator for the State of Montana, for the people of that state and this nation.

Mr. CLARK. Senator, as always, it has been a pleasure having you with us. Thank you for being our guest on Issues and Answers.

Senator MANSFIELD. Thank you.